



JOSEPH R. BIDEN, III
ATTORNEY GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
820 NORTH FRENCH STREET
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19801

CONTACT JASON MILLER
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
PHONE (302) 577-8949
CELL (302) 893-8939
Jason.Miller@state.de.us

Media Release

September 7, 2011

Biden, Community Leaders Launch Collaboration to Protect Children from Abuse *Stewards of Children program aims to train 35,000 Delawareans*

Wilmington – Delaware Attorney General Beau Biden, child advocates and community leaders today announced a coordinated initiative to educate tens of thousands of Delaware adults about recognizing the signs of child sexual abuse and reporting suspected crimes. The partnership, which includes Prevent Child Abuse Delaware, the YMCA of Delaware and the Attorney General's Office, aims to train 35,000 Delawareans, or about 5% of the state's population, in the *Stewards of Children* sexual abuse prevention curriculum.

"It is not a child's job to protect him or herself from abuse, it's our job. This program gives adults the tools and the information we need to protect kids," said Attorney General Biden. "Everyone in Delaware is a mandatory reporter – we are all obligated to intervene when we see a child in danger, but we don't always know what to look for. When only one in ten abused children reaches out for help, we know that it falls to the adults to see the signs and make the call."

At work in 48 states and 10 countries, the *Stewards of Children* program is designed to teach adults the signs of child sex abuse to prevent it and report suspected incidents. The program highlights facts about abuse, common situations in which it occurs, ways to talk to children and adults about it, and simple and effective protection strategies. Taught by trained facilitators to the general public, the program is brief, inexpensive, and effective. Participants report a 38% increase in knowledge and attitudes about child sex abuse.

"Prevent Child Abuse Delaware is delighted to be involved with its partners in this important child sexual abuse prevention initiative," said Karen DeRasmo, the organization's Executive Director. "The *Stewards of Children* project represents the joint venture of several groups working throughout the state to create safer communities for our children. The goal of this project is to reach the 'tipping point,' as described in the work of Malcolm Gladwell, by educating approximately 35,000 adults about the tools and knowledge they need to keep children safe."

Michael Graves, President of YMCA of Delaware, said, "The Y's three impact focus areas are youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The Y believes preventing sexual child abuse is a community social responsibility necessary for healthy youth development. With 40,000 adult Y members across the state we believe we can help operationalize this evidence based effort to reach the goal of training 35,000 people. Achieving the goal is not possible without numerous collaborations and partnerships."

All reports of child abuse and neglect in the State of Delaware should be made to the 24 hour Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at **1-800-292-9582**. Individuals and organizations can learn more about the Stewards of Children program and schedule a training session by calling Prevent Child Abuse Delaware at 302-425-7490 or visiting www.pcadelaware.org.

#